

THE FATE OF NEUTRALITY

By KURT FISCHER

The second World War began with four nations involved. Today there are hardly four nations left which still measure up to the standards of neutrality as defined by International Law. What has happened to neutrality? What are its future prospects?—K.M.

IN ancient times and during the Middle Ages we do not find neutrality amongst the usages applied in the intercourse between states. Only the great commercial communities such as the German Hansa and the Italian maritime republics attempted to bring about some sort of regulations in the usages of war to protect their own neutral interests. With the beginning of modern times, neutrality, i.e., the state of being neutral (from the Latin *neuter*, neither of two), gradually began to be accepted as an institution of International Law. But not until the eighteenth century did the idea of neutrality approach the present-day definition, viz., that neutral nations, during a war, are those which take no one's part, remaining friends with both parties and favoring neither to the detriment of the other. It was later supplemented by the doctrine that neutrals do not have to sit in judgment on the belligerents or decide whose cause is just. On the other hand, it was considered to be the duty of belligerents to respect neutral territory and, in case of violation, to make reparation.

In 1780, during the American War of Independence, the neutrals for the first time took up arms in defense of their rights on the seas. This First Armed Neutrality, suggested by Russia and joined by many other states, was directed against infringements on the part of England. And although this and the Second Armed Neutrality of 1800—again necessitated by England's attitude—had no immediate success, the postulated principles were eventually recognized in the Paris Declaration of 1856, which abolished privateering; established the rule of "free ships, free goods" except contraband; prohibited the appropriation of neutral goods on enemy ships, again excepting contraband; and stipulated that blockades must be effective in order to be legally binding.

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

During the nineteenth century the general principles of neutrality came to be interpreted more strictly, both in theory and practice. It was considered to be within the rights of a state to stay neutral in any armed conflict, the belligerents being obliged to respect neutral territory and territorial waters and to abstain from forcing would-be neutrals into war, the right of self-defense being the only justification for carrying hostilities into neutral territory. On the part of the neutral, neutrality presupposed the renunciation of any action to the benefit or disadvantage of any one of the belligerents, as well as the obligation to rebuke any violation of his territory or territorial waters, to disarm or intern foreign troops entering his territory, and to disarm belligerent warships if these stayed more than twenty-four hours in port for the strictly limited purposes of revictualing and refueling.

According to International Law, the duties of neutrality are chiefly incumbent on the respective states and only to a very minor degree on their citizens. Thus it is possible for part of the press and for private citizens of a state pursuing a policy of neutrality to disregard the official impartiality unless restrained by special legislation as has been introduced in some countries.

MODERN VARIATIONS

A special position is held by neutralized states which, by international agreement, are perpetually bound to abstain from participation in any war. The Swiss Confederation, which has pursued a traditional policy of neutrality since it was recognized by the Westphalian Peace of 1648, was the first state neutralized—in 1815 at the Vienna Congress—and is the only one in existence today. Other cases were those of Belgium

(neutralized in 1839), of Luxemburg (in 1867), and of the Congo State (in 1885); but the Versailles Treaty of 1919 abrogated the perpetual neutralization of these latter three.

Otherwise neutrality is either voluntary, i.e., without being enforced by any treaty obligation; or it is conventional, i.e., by agreement to remain neutral in a particular war. At present Sweden would offer an instance of the former, and Japan—*vis-à-vis* the German-Soviet war—of the latter.

"Benevolent neutrality," although the subject of diplomatic negotiations and agreements, has not been recognized by International Law. During the present war the term "nonbelligerence" has therefore been used instead by some nations when not yet at war. It implies that no neutral attitude is being pretended. Italy, being bound by a military alliance to the Reich but not yet in the war then, was the first state during the present struggle to define her position as "nonbelligerence." For some time Spain was wont to apply this term to her status in recognition of the Italian and German aid given during her Civil War and in view of her anti-Bolshevist attitude. Turkey's stand in the early part of the war was likewise called "nonbelligerent," as she had concluded a pact of alliance with England and France early during the war.

International Law countenances the pursuit of self-interest on the part of a state, and neutrality as one of its means. But one fact must be clearly understood: International Law does not protect a neutral against war, for it recognizes the right of any state to wage war against another. International Law is simply meant to protect neutrals against infringements on their rights as neutrals. Thus it would obviously be within International Law if Britain, for example, declared war upon Sweden; but it is not within her rights to trespass upon Swedish rights derived from her neutral status in order to extract benefits to the disadvantage of an opponent.

THE EFFECT OF THE GREAT WAR

The valuation of neutrality as a political principle, if shown in a curve, would indicate a rise throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century up to a time just prior to the outbreak of the Great War. Then begins a marked decline. Germany and Austria-Hungary, of course, being continental powers with virtually no access to the sea,

had nothing to gain through the spreading of the war; on the contrary, they had a great deal to lose. Hence their desire to see neutrality upheld by as many states as possible. The Entente, on the other hand, and notably England—then still undisputed mistress of the seven seas—desiring to cut off Germany from outside supplies and give the war the character of a crusade, were bent on involving as many neutrals on their side as they could manage. From the outset they used all the means of military, diplomatic, and economic pressure as well as propaganda and bribery toward this end. They began hostilities in Central Africa, which had been neutralized under the Congo Act, and forced Liberia to join as a belligerent. They violated Greek neutrality. Portugal, China, Siam, Brazil, Cuba, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Haiti, and Honduras were cajoled into declaring war, although none of them bordered on the Central Powers or had any immediate, let alone vital, interest in the struggle. Others were made to break off diplomatic relations with the Central Powers as, for instance, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, and the Dominican Republic.

To cover up its antineutral policy, the Entente raised a great cry over Germany's attack on Belgium. Germany expected the French armies, concentrated in northeastern France, to cross into Belgium in accordance with the French war plan XVII. Hence, claiming the right of self-defense, Germany presented Belgium with an ultimatum, demanding passage for her armies through Belgium and promising reparations for any damage done. Belgium rejected the ultimatum.

VERSAILLES AND THE LEAGUE

The Versailles Treaty of 1919, being a child of the Allies, is quite consistent with their negative attitude toward neutrality. By embodying the alleged war guilt of the Central Powers in their entire postwar system, the Allies elevated the maintenance of the *status quo* to the rank of the just cause. This task was allotted to the League of Nations; and its basic principle of collective responsibility, which was binding for all members including the former neutrals, prejudiced the very foundations of true neutrality. It nullified the traditional right of a sovereign state to keep aloof from a conflict. Article 16 of the League's Covenant states that any member of the League re-

sorting to war in violation of the agreements to arbitrate shall "*ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other members of the League," and the latter shall forthwith discontinue trade and financial relations with the offending state.

Parallel to the succession of failures which the League had to register since 1932, neutrality appeared to take on a new lease of life. During the Italo-Abyssinian War, Albania, Austria, and Hungary already refused participation in the sanctions against Italy, while Switzerland circumvented the problem by prohibiting exports to both belligerents. After the termination of that conflict, the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg declared that they no longer felt themselves bound by Article 16. Switzerland followed suit in 1938.

THE POSITION IN WORLD WAR II

September 3, 1939, marks the commencement of a new Allied war against the Reich as well as against neutrality. The basic position of the two camps was patterned after World War I. Germany, bordering on twelve countries and protected by a natural barrier only in the south, with a navy amounting only to a fraction of what it was in 1914, and still largely dependent on raw materials from abroad, was intent upon a quick military decision against her adversaries and peaceful relations and trade with as large a foreign area as possible. Her enemies, notably Britain, on the other hand, were out to hem in Germany from all sides in order to strangle her politically and economically with a minimum of military effort, an aim applicable only by utilizing the neutrals, i.e., by destroying their neutrality.

One of Britain's first steps was the declaration of a blockade against Reich imports, a measure that hit many neutral states. Moreover, it was not in accordance with International Law, which considers a blockade admissible only if it blocks the entire stretch of coast of the blockaded country. This is not the case now, nor was it during World War I, when it was termed "illegal" and "indefensible" by President Wilson. Other complementary British measures equally disregarded International Law. The "contraband" list comprised virtually every commercial article. Neutral vessels were taken to British ports and kept waiting there for weeks and even months. Mailbags were seized or searched. The issue of

navicerts (certificates of the British Navy allowing neutral cargoes to proceed to their destination) was imposed and employed for economic espionage. Neutral firms were black-listed for trading with the enemy. On November 28, 1939, the blockade of German exports was announced over the indignant protests of neutrals who were thereby deprived of urgently needed German goods.

Neutral territory was violated by the Allies from the very beginning. Here is the case record of the first week of war:

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| Night of Sept. 3/4 | British planes having attacked Wilhelmshaven cross Dutch territory. |
| Sept. 4 | British planes drop bombs on the Danish port of Esbjerg. British planes returning from the German Bight cross Dutch territory. |
| Sept. 5 | The German vessel <i>Olinda</i> is sunk by the British cruiser <i>Ajax</i> off Rio Grande in Brazilian territorial waters. |
| Sept. 6 | British planes cross Belgian territory. British planes attack the German vessel <i>Franken</i> near Padang (Sumatra) in Dutch territorial waters. British planes cross Danish territory. British planes cross Norwegian territory three times. |
| Sept. 8 | British planes cross Danish territory at several places. A British plane crosses Norwegian territory. |
| Night of Sept. 8/9 | British planes cross Dutch territory. British planes cross Belgian territory, one bomber being forced to land while one Belgian plane is downed over Belgian soil. |
| Sept. 9 | British planes cross Danish territory. |
| Sept. 10 | British planes cross Danish territory. British planes cross Belgian territory. |

Here again, neutral protests were of no avail. Nor could they be, for these violations of neutrality grew from a general hostility toward the very principle of neutrality.

The leitmotiv was sounded on January 20, 1940, when Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, spoke of the duty of neutrals to take a common stand with the British and French Empires. On

January 31, Prime Minister Chamberlain reproached the neutrals for their "uninterested indifference." On February 24 he called the British attack on the German vessel *Altmark* in Norwegian territorial waters merely a "technical breach of neutrality." On March 30, Churchill declared it would not be fair for the Western Powers to hold fast to legal agreements in a life-and-death struggle. On April 2 the Marquess of Crewe, member of the Privy Council, said in the House of Lords that Britain was prepared to enter Scandinavian waters to enforce the blockade and pleaded with the neutrals to show understanding for "technical infractions of International Law such as the three-mile limit, which we may have committed or may commit."

ONE NEUTRAL AFTER ANOTHER

Major action followed on the heels of these pronouncements. After the miscarriage of a planned intervention in the Soviet-Finnish conflict during March 1940 in which Norway and Sweden were to be used as bases, the laying of three British minefields in Norwegian territorial waters early in April 1940 converted that country into a battlefield. Meanwhile, Belgium and the Netherlands had, as proved by subsequent German White Books, departed considerably from the course of strict neutrality, among other things by participating in staff talks with England and France. On May 10 German troops crossed the Dutch and Belgian borders. Next the British turned to the Balkans, whence the Reich obtained large quantities of foodstuffs and raw materials. Britain persuaded Greece to deviate from neutrality by opening her ports and territorial waters to the British Navy, which resulted in the Italo-Greek war. She instigated a *Putsch* in Yugoslavia, which led that country into the war.

The commencement of virtual belligerency on the part of the USA in spring 1941 increased the threats to neutrality. While Britain and the Soviet Union tackled Iran with the acclamation of the USA and forced Afghanistan off neutrality, America occupied Greenland and Iceland and busied herself in Central and South America. To the tune of Pan-American security and defense, one country after another was made to abandon its neutrality. Outside of Europe there was finally no neutral state left with the exception of Argentina. In Europe, leaving out of account tiny Monaco and Liechtenstein,

only Turkey, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, the Vatican, and Eire managed to preserve their neutrality by the end of 1942. Their difficulties began when the military initiative passed into Allied hands.

PRESSURE

The British navicert system and black lists were enforced even where trade could not possibly have had any connection with the war against the Reich as, for example, in the shipment of certain goods between Eire and Portugal or between Spain and Argentina; they offered an excellent means of exerting pressure. The USA, too, has adopted black-listing and, according to the US State Department, no less than 15,000 firms were on the US black list in May 1944 and were to be denied normal trade even after the war merely because they had carried on entirely legal trade with Axis countries. The freezing of neutral funds and the stoppage of supplies to neutrals, the violation of neutral sovereignty in coastal waters as well as in the air: all were employed to exert pressure on the neutrals. The cancellation of diplomatic privileges by Britain in the spring of 1944 likewise trespassed on their rights.

As the war against neutrality progressed toward a climax, it was accompanied by Allied declarations. Jan Smuts, the South African Premier, said on November 25, 1943: "Neutrality is obsolete, is dead." On May 25, 1944, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden stated that, in order to shorten the war, the neutral states must give up their rights, thus supporting an earlier utterance of Arthur Greenwood that neutrality was now an antiquated idea and that those who were not for England were against her. To put it in the concise language of the *New York Post*, all this means: "To Hell with Neutrality."

ARGENTINA

In comparison to World War I, when the Pan-American Union was not yet effective enough to influence the foreign policy of its members, the upholding of strict neutrality had grown more difficult for the Latin American states during the present conflict. The Havana Agreement of July 1940, which provides for mutual assistance and defensive co-operation on the part of all American countries, caused Argentina, at the outbreak of the Pacific War, to abstain from the customary declaration of neutrality vis-à-vis

the USA-Japanese war, although such a declaration was made with regard to the British-Japanese war. Moreover, a decree was issued according to which the USA was not to be regarded as a belligerent. Beyond that gesture, however, she would not go. Up to January 20, 1943, she was in company with Chile in keeping aloof from the war; but after the latter yielded to the USA and severed relations with the Axis, Argentina found herself exposed to ruthless pressure on the part of the United States, including a drastic American export embargo (August 3, 1943). On January 26, 1944, Argentina yielded by rupturing diplomatic relations with Tokyo and Berlin. But this did not help a great deal.

Washington, supported by the New York and Washington press, more or less openly demanded an Argentine declaration of war on the Axis. No Lend-Lease assistance was forthcoming, nor was Argentina invited to become a member of the UNRRA. The tone of the British press also remained unfriendly. But when President Ramirez wavered and began to play with the idea of declaring war upon the Axis, a new government was formed on February 24, 1944, under the presidency of General Farrell. Although the new administration declared that the country's foreign policy would remain unchanged, Washington broke off relations with Argentina on March 3, and Britain recalled her Ambassador in July. If the threat of economic sanctions has not yet been carried out, it is probably owing to Britain not being prepared to go to such lengths—partly because she has large investments in Argentina but also because she is dependent on Argentine supplies, especially of meat. Viewed retrospectively, it is difficult to see why Argentina should have departed at all from her neutrality.

TURKEY

With the outbreak of the European war, the country in control of the Dardanelles once again became one of the focal points of British and French diplomatic activity. Through the Treaty of Ankara of October 19, 1939, Turkey joined Britain and France as an ally. She did not, however, enter the war, in order not to jeopardize her relations with the USSR, then outwardly on friendly terms with Germany. But she granted Britain and France a monopoly on her chromium production, and it was Molotov who pointed out at the time that Turkey,

by signing the treaty, had relinquished her neutrality. Germany reopened the avenue to neutrality for her when, after the Balkan blitz campaign and just prior to the Soviet-German war, the German Government offered and concluded a pact of friendship and nonaggression with Turkey (June 18, 1941). This political readjustment was supplemented in 1941, 1942, and 1943 by a number of trade agreements on a barter basis. The treaty of friendship with the Reich, of which Britain had been notified beforehand, became a valuable instrument in the hands of Turkey to keep out of the war; and the commercial agreements with Germany helped her a great deal in overcoming her economic difficulties, as Britain was unable to take Germany's place in Turkish trade, the latter country accounting for 52 per cent of Turkey's exports and 43 per cent of her imports in 1938.

To strengthen the Allied position, the USA, on December 3, 1941, offered Turkey a Lend-Lease credit. Most of this aid, however, remained on paper. Germany also offered Turkey a credit, and in turn, by the agreement of December 31, 1942, was to receive, among other commodities, 150,000 tons of chromite in 1943/44, the British monopoly having expired on January 3, 1943. In September 1942, President İnönü evaded a meeting with Wendell Willkie in Istanbul by going on an inspection tour to Thrace. At the same time the Turkish Government, answering Allied proposals, made it clear that the passage of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet through the Dardanelles could not be permitted as being contrary to the Treaty of Montreux. The Conference of Adana between Churchill and President İnönü (January 30/31, 1943) brought about no visible change in Turkey's foreign policy. İnönü reaffirmed Turkish neutrality in his speech of June 8, 1943, and turned down the Allied demand not to grant asylum to Axis leaders. During the Cairo Conference (December 4/6, 1943) President İnönü and Foreign Minister Menemencoglu again rejected all Allied demands for Turkey's entry into the war and for bases and facilities for the Allied air force. Now the Allies turned on the third degree. On February 4, 1944, after five weeks of conferences with the Turkish General Staff, a British military mission and 340 British technical experts left the country, abandoning construction jobs in Turkish ports and military establishments; Anglo-American war-material deliveries were stopped; the charter of five

vessels to Turkey was canceled. There followed the joint US and British *démarche* of mid-April, in the form of a 48-hour ultimatum, demanding the rupture of trade relations with the Reich. While not yielding fully, the Turkish Government for the first time bowed to pressure and, as a first concession, placed an embargo on the exports of chromite to the Reich effective from April 21. The second concession followed in June, when certain types of German vessels were prohibited passage through the Straits and a control instituted for all German merchantmen. The chief upholder of Turkish neutrality, Foreign Minister Menemencoglu, resigned. Far from being satisfied, the Allies continued their pressure until Turkey severed her diplomatic and commercial relations with Germany (August 2, 1944), thereby not only breaking treaty obligations but definitely leaving the camp of the neutrals.

SWEDEN

In Sweden a policy of neutrality has consistently been adhered to since the Napoleonic Wars. But, at the same time, the Swedish nation has always felt itself to be a member of the group of Scandinavian peoples. During the Soviet-Finnish winter war of 1939/40, Sweden, while keeping formal neutrality, supported Finland in various ways, repeating such action after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, when she permitted the transit of one German division through Sweden to northern Finland. Sweden is, of course, interested in the existence of an independent Finland as a buffer between herself and the colossus in the east, through whom she once lost her status as a great power and who is the only real menace to her national existence. This also explains her repeated attempts at mediation between the Finns and the Soviets, resulting from the hope of thereby keeping the Soviets as far away from Sweden as possible.

After the Norwegian campaign, Sweden was almost completely, and after June 22, 1941, completely surrounded by German-controlled territories or waters. Her need for imports of coal, coke, pig iron, rolling-mill products, fertilizer, chemicals, synthetic rubber, and salt, forced her to rely on the good will of the Reich, either for the supply or for the transit from the rest of Europe; in return for this she shipped iron ore, cellulose, and high-grade finished goods, among them ball bearings, to Germany. For overseas supplies she remained depend-

ent not only on the Reich—for passage into the North Sea—but also on the British, who controlled the oceanic sea lanes. The Swedish Government arrived at an understanding with both, conceding to the British the lease of 600,000 tons of merchant tonnage outside of blockaded zones, and to the Germans the transit traffic through Sweden.

But Sweden did not escape Allied pressure against her neutrality. The Allies tried to prevent Germany's imports from Sweden, without bothering much about what the loss of the reciprocal imports from Europe meant to Sweden. In their war against German aircraft production, the Allies were particularly interested in stopping Sweden's export of ball bearings. This was demanded by a British and US *démarche* in Stockholm, following upon State Secretary Hull's speech of April 9, 1944. When the Swedish Government refused to comply, a US press campaign threatened with such reprisals as the exclusion of Swedish vessels from convoy protection, the stopping of all exports and food shipments to Sweden, and the confiscation of Swedish property and deposits in the USA, while an American delegation proceeded to Sweden in order to bring pressure and threats to bear directly upon the ball-bearing industry. In September a strong protest was sent to Sweden by the USA, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union in connection with Swedish trade relations with the Reich. Now Sweden yielded: while refusing to suspend her exports to Germany, she banned all commercial shipping in her territorial waters in the Baltic, thereby *de facto* practically discontinuing trade with the Reich.

SPAIN

The turbulent years of the Spanish Civil War were hardly over when the second World War began. Spain's internal and economic situation, calling as it did for complete reconstruction, pointed to neutrality as the only possible line to be followed. After its terrible experiences with the Communist menace in its own borders, and as a signatory to the Anti-Comintern Pact, the country was bent on an anti-Communist course. When Italy joined Germany's side in the war, Spain, in recognition of Italy's aid in the Civil War, adopted a policy of pro-Axis nonbelligerence, a tendency strengthened after the outbreak of the Soviet-German war when volunteers formed the "Blue Division" to fight with the German armies against the Bolsheviks.

With the beginning of Allied operations in French North Africa, Spain found herself in a changed position and reverted to neutrality, coupled a little later with a joint Spanish-Portuguese declaration to the effect that the two countries would henceforth form a bloc of mutual friendship and external peace. In August 1943 the heat was turned on Spain when Sir Samuel Hoare, British Ambassador to Madrid, met General Franco for a discussion of Allied demands. These discussions continued for some months, reaching a climax early this year after a violent Allied press campaign filled with threats and abuse.

The Anglo-American demands concerned (1) the closure of the German Consulate at Tangier; (2) the handing over of Italian merchantmen which had sought refuge in Spanish waters; (3) the withdrawal of the Blue Division; and (4) the cessation of certain supplies, chiefly tungsten, to the Reich. For many months the Spanish Government resisted the pressure, although it was not allowed to forget Spain's dependence on the navicerts of the British blockade authorities for vital imports and although Spanish refugees of the Leftist Popular Front, whose leaders (Negrin, Alvarez, etc.) had been allowed to take up domicile in French North Africa, were treated with ostentatious friendliness by the Allied press. Finally, the Allies stopped all oil shipments to Spain. This was a serious blow, as the war-time obstacles to all coastal shipping and the bad condition of the Spanish railways—a legacy of the Civil War—made motor transportation indispensable, unless Spain was to slip back into economic chaos. The Spanish Government yielded on the first three points and cut down the country's tungsten exports by twenty per cent.

PORTUGAL

The situation in Portugal is characterized by her alliance with Britain on the one hand, and by a strictly anti-Communist attitude and close ties of friendship with anti-Communist Spain on the other. Despite the former, she has proclaimed her neutrality during the present war, well remembering her participation in World War I, which brought her to the brink of bankruptcy and disintegration.

Being dependent upon imports of grain, coal, and fuel from overseas, Portugal was and continues to be exposed to Allied methods of coercion. At first she managed to avoid the consequences. When there was a

campaign in the USA advocating seizure of the Azores after the Iceland pattern, President Carmona paid an ostentatious visit to the islands. The attack on and occupation of Timor in December 1941 by Australian and Dutch troops mark the first major Allied violation of Portuguese neutrality. When the Anglo-American landing in North Africa in November 1942 brought the war closer to Portugal herself, a British declaration assured Portugal that no action affecting her territory at home or abroad was planned. But less than a year later, in contravention of this pledge and by means of the strongest economic pressure, an agreement was extracted by the British whereby they obtained the military use of the Azores in return for their promise to supply Portugal with vital commodities and respect her neutrality.

Anglo-American demands made in the spring of 1944 for a cessation of tungsten shipments to Germany were at first rejected by the Salazar Government. But threats and economic pressure continued so that finally, yielding to a British ultimatum, Portugal declared an embargo on all tungsten exports.

SWITZERLAND

As the only neutralized state in the world, Switzerland occupies a special position among the neutrals. As Germany and Italy completely surrounded her territory for more than three years, going to great lengths to extend Switzerland facilities for her overseas trade, she was less exposed to Allied pressure than the other neutral states. Violations of Swiss neutrality on the part of the Allies mounted in the same degree as their troops approached closer to the Swiss borders. Swiss territory was crossed by Allied planes on many occasions, bombs were dropped on a number of towns and villages, and the town of Schaffhausen was partly destroyed. Since September 1944, Allied armies have been in occupation of territory bordering on Switzerland's western frontier.

Economic pressure has also been exerted by the Allies on Switzerland at various times by such measures as the blocking of Swiss accounts in the USA and the application of Britain's navicert system. Switzerland's concession to this pressure was her recent ban on the export of war materials. However, by making this ban applicable to all belligerents, Switzerland has continued to adhere to her policy of neutrality. Moreover, she generously promoted the work of the International Red Cross.

THE VATICAN

Since the territory under the sovereignty of the Holy See comprises no more than 110 acres, its military and economic significance is of no account. But the policy of neutrality pursued by the Vatican has been of outstanding moral and political importance. The Vatican being the spiritual center of the Catholic world, its attitude has had a bearing on the policy of a considerable part of the globe, notably in the Americas and Western Europe. With Catholics fighting in both belligerent camps and being represented among neutral countries as well as countries occupied by foreign powers, neutrality is obviously dictated by reasons of practical politics, quite aside from spiritual considerations of the Church pointing in the same direction. These latter have found expression in a number of appeals for peace. Although during 1942, following upon the Japanese occupation of the preponderantly Catholic Philippines, the Vatican exchanged diplomatic representatives with non-Christian Japan, no relations have as yet been taken up with the Kremlin and Bolshevism has frequently been denounced by the Holy See.

All attempts on the part of Washington and London to induce the Vatican to abandon its strict neutrality have failed. Roosevelt started his endeavors to this end in September 1942, when he dispatched Myron Taylor to Rome with a personal message asking the Pope to pronounce the war against National Socialist Germany a "just war." This demand was rejected. Early in 1942 it became known that Churchill had offered to revise the status of the holy sites of Christendom in Palestine in exchange for a *rapprochement* of the Vatican with the Allies. This proposal was likewise turned down. Indirect attempts to induce a reaction unilaterally favorable to the Anglo-American side failed or were ignored, among them being the endorsement sought for American postwar plans and the suggestion to remove the Vatican to the Western Hemisphere, which was discussed in the USA early in 1944.

EIRE

In 1937, after a struggle lasting for centuries, Eire gained full sovereignty and freedom of action under the Westminster Statute as a republican member of the British Commonwealth. But the oppression which the country had suffered had created so deep a chasm between the Irish and the English that the recognition of full dominion

status was not able to wipe out the memories of the past, all the more so as Northern Ireland remained under English rule.

It was, therefore, no surprise when, after the outbreak of the present war, Eire declared her neutrality. It is, however, remarkable how she has succeeded in upholding this neutrality. There was certainly no lack of threats, persuasion, and direct pressure on the part of the Allies, and Eire's position has remained far from easy, inasmuch as she is entirely dependent upon the Anglo-Americans for vital imports. Eire has been enlisting all the support accessible to her—the US citizens of Irish extraction, who carry weight at the polls; legal appeal to the Westminster Statute, which is jealously guarded by all the Dominions; the closer adjusting of her economy to her immediate needs. Thus she has increased her wheat and potato acreage as well as her peat production while curtailing her electric-power output in order to become less dependent upon food and coal imports. On the other hand, the Irish Premier, Eamon de Valera, is well aware of the fact that Britain cannot easily dispense with Eire's agricultural supplies, especially meat, or her labor potential. Being a Catholic and anti-Communist nation, Eire has attempted to cooperate more closely with the Iberian peoples.

Naturally, the Allies are chiefly interested in naval bases on the west and south coasts of Ireland. But Eire has refused to cede, sell, or lease any part of her territory for the establishment of such bases to either Britain, Canada, or the USA. The elections which took place in May 1944, although necessitated by a domestic question, gave De Valera and his policy of neutrality a clear majority.

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Neutrality is doomed if the respect for neutrality vanishes. No medium-sized or small state can in the long run preserve its neutrality if some of the great powers are determined to destroy it.

In a world as it is envisaged by the Allies and as proclaimed in Dumbarton Oaks, there is no place left for neutrality, neither for the opportunistic neutrality exercised by some states, nor for the traditional neutrality of Switzerland. Neutrality cannot be recognized by those who—to quote the title of Wendell Willkie's book—are bent on establishing "One World," be it a Soviet-world, an American world. This is quite

obvious from the various plans for the future of the world emanating from the Allied camp and dealing with world security, world currency, world economy, world traffic, to which all nations are expected to subscribe at the bidding of the big powers. Only in a world which allows problems arising between two or more nations to be dealt with by those directly concerned, a world not controlled by one group of powers only, is there room left for neutrality.

The fact that the Anglo-Americans have been more prominent in our survey of the battle against the neutrals does not mean that the Soviet Union takes a different stand from that of her allies. Moscow's ideology, which transcends the idea of nation and seeks to encompass the whole world, excludes any recognition of neutrality. The lashing out against Spain and Portugal in connection with the air traffic conference in Chicago, the refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Switzerland, the bitter complaints against Turkey's failing to declare war on Germany, the forcing of Rumania and Bulgaria into war with the Axis, all these events occurring during the past few weeks have made the Soviet policy toward neutrality quite clear.

Those nations which made concessions to the antineutral demands of the Allies have found that their position grew worse after every concession. Spain has to look on while armies are being prepared in French North Africa and France to carry the fires of civil war into her borders. Turkey and Argentina find themselves treated with greater hostility after having broken off relations with Germany than they were before; and the Swedes, who worked so hard trying to return Finland to a neutral status, have Soviet troops on their border, and Soviet warships lying among the Åland Islands just outside of Stockholm.

A world without neutrals would be a poorer world. Neutrality has redeemed its obligation toward humanity in many ways. We have only to think of the magnificent work of the Red Cross, the granting of asylum, the exchange of prisoners and internees, the representation of belligerents in enemy countries, not to mention the fact that the presence of neutral states, able to see both sides of an issue and living on friendly terms with both warring camps, injects calm and reason into an atmosphere otherwise poisoned by hatred.

